

CESD Senior High Cohorts

The 2014-2015 school year will see shifts in the structure and organization of senior high cohorts. These changes are based on feedback from cohort members, cohort facilitators, school administrators, and the central office leadership team. The intent of these changes is to adapt the cohorts to better meet the needs of teachers in order to purposefully collaborate towards improving student learning. Below is a brief summary of the changes:

1. Why are we restructuring cohorts?

- Throughout the 2013-14 school year, the feedback from senior high teachers has been largely positive with teachers finding great value in collaborating with other subject area specialists. However, some teachers expressed frustration around the inability to meet with colleagues due to the differences in how schools used the collaborative calendar days (e.g. ½ days, full days, school based days).

2. How has common time been created to meet with colleagues?

- Three collaborative days have been set aside next year to provide a common time for senior high teachers to meet as teams to work and learn together. These dates are: October 27, November 28 and March 20.

3. How are the cohorts going to be structured? Do we have to meet as a big group?

- Members of subject area teams will be supported in establishing small groups in order to allow members to collaborate around goals that are more meaningful and responsive to their needs.
- Small groups will help create fewer situations where cohort members want to collaborate but have had to largely compromise their own interests in order to stay connected to the larger cohort.
- The first meeting of the year may start with the whole group working on goal setting and establishing smaller groups (it will be up to the members, based on their interests and the evidence they collect in their teaching practice, to determine the groups and their goals).
 - This would allow for whole group discussion of issues, sharing of progress on projects, and seeking of input from the larger group on projects.
 - This could be scheduled at the beginning or end of a day, or in whatever way the larger group would like.
- Each small group would take on a shared leadership model, in which the members are responsible to each other and to sharing their work with their colleagues in other groups.

4. Is someone from central office going to put us into small groups?

- To assist with planning and organization, a Google Doc like the one [HERE](#) will be used to identify areas of interest and to communicate to the larger group what is being worked on (make sure to use the tab along the bottom to see both sheets).
- The Google Doc will allow members to easily see what others are interested in and to share what they would like to collaborate on, helping them form groups with others who have similar goals.

5. Where will we meet?

- School sites would be an ideal location to meet in order to allow for working groups to break out into multiple locations since students will not be in on these days. Division office spaces will also still be available, as well as meeting rooms at transportation, IMC, and the CLC in Olds.
- Small groups will decide the most convenient location for them to meet.

6. What if we want to meet as a large group for at least part of the day?

- Some cohorts have indicated that it would still be desirable to meet at a common location. This would allow for the larger group connection, sharing of projects and resources, and maintenance of the cohorts collaborative community.
- Others may choose to meet virtually as a whole group, while working face to face with a smaller working group in a location of their choice.

7. How will we know what each group is accomplishing?

- The expectation of the cohorts would be that each group would work towards creating resources, products or strategies which achieve the goal of collaborative time: improving student learning.
- Cohort members will be expected to share the products of their work with each other. Each cohort will establish a common method for sharing resources (wikis, google docs, dropbox, etc.).

8. Do we have to meet in subject areas? Can we meet in interest areas?

- If individuals have set goals around specific areas (e.g. senior high literacy, continuum of supports), this focus should be entered into the Google Doc like the one [HERE](#) (make sure to use the tab along the bottom to see both sheets) to find others who have set similar goals.

9. Will smaller groups adjust and reorganize as time goes on?

- As work is completed it will be important to allow for flexible reorganization of working groups.
- As well, as new teachers join us, it will be important to maintain the welcoming and supportive community that presently exists.

10. How will these groups be supported by the district?

- Learning Services Coordinators will still be connected to the groups to help support in any way that is needed (e.g. helping to connect individuals with groups, helping set up sharing sites, helping with room bookings, providing resources or guidance, etc.)